



## Monthly Accomplishments

October 2012

### Fisheries Activities

Currently, 70 Gila trout are being held in refugium at NMFWCO. The Gila trout were brought on station in June 2012, for refuge from Whiskey Creek, Gila National Forest due to the Whitewater-Baldy Complex Fire. The Gila trout are held in a naturalized tank system mimicking a stream habitat, with substrate and cover. In effort to lower densities and minimize aggressive territorial behavior, staff relocated a portion of the fish to a second naturalized rearing system on stand-by. The Gila trout continue to be active, using cover, aggressively feeding, and maintaining their wild coloration. These Gila trout are of the Whiskey lineage and have not previously been successfully held or replicated in a hatchery setting.



Staff assisted the Navajo Nation with active harvesting of the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI) ponds. A total of 2,700 razorback suckers (1,500 - Hidden pond, 1,200 - East Avocet

pond) were harvested and stocked into the San Juan River.

In cooperation with U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), staff completed salvage efforts for the RGSM on the Rio Grande. The official end of salvage (irrigation) season is November 15th, however, as of October 31st the river had continuous flow. Between June and October, the entire San Acacia reach (all 31.8 miles) between the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to Escondido, New Mexico had been salvaged. From July to October, 19.1 miles of the Isleta Reach, between the Peralta Wasteway to near Tome, was salvaged. A total of 4,164 (2,509 San Acacia, 1,658 Isleta) adult RGSM (>30mm) were collected from isolated pools, transported, and released into a flowing portion of the Rio Grande within each reach.

Over a period of ten days, staff assisted Dexter National Fish Hatchery and Technical Center (NFH & TC), tag 200,000 Age-0 Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) with visible implant elastomer (VIE) tags. The Albuquerque Biological Park and New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission staff also completed tagging of RGSM held on their stations with VIE tags. Staff will assist with stocking of the tagged RGSM in November 2012 in accordance with the RGSM Augmentation Plan (2008-2012). The plan states that augmentation will occur at

individual monitoring sites when September RGSM densities are < 1.00fish/100m<sup>2</sup>.

Staff assisted Jicarilla Apache Tribe with habitat assessments and fish surveys on Navajo River as a follow-up to habitat improvements.

In cooperation with Pueblo of Isleta, staff completed monthly monitoring for the RGSM within the Middle Rio Grande and Pueblo of Isleta. Monitoring efforts are to determine presence/absence of visible implant elastomer tagged fish in relation to augmentation and research efforts.

With the assistance from Mora NFH and NMDGF, staff stocked 1,000 Gila trout (Main Diamond lineage) averaging 4.0 inches in length into Black Canyon Creek, Gila National Forest for recovery purposes.

With the assistance of Uvalde National Fish Hatchery (NFH), staff stocked 1,700 razorback suckers into the San Juan River. The razorback suckers were soft-released (held in river pens for 24-hours) near Bloomfield, New Mexico.

In cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), staff completed fish community monitoring in the Canadian River east of Tucumcari, New Mexico. A principal objective of this monitoring is to collect baseline

data on the presence/absence of the federally listed Arkansas River shiner. Portions of these monitoring efforts are supported through funds provided by the R2 Science Application program and support science priorities of the Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

Staff completed monthly monitoring of the Pecos River fish community at seven sites upstream of Lake Sumner. Data will be used to define the status of the fish community, with emphasis on Pecos bluntnose shiner, in response to low/no flow during winter months.

Staff continue working with students and teachers from Architecture, Construction & Engineering (ACE) Leadership High School to complete construction of two bridges at the RGSM Sanctuary. The ACE students designed the bridges and put together a materials list and budget. Students expect to complete construction of the two bridges in November 2012. The 12-foot and 35-foot bridges span the artificial stream tying into the interpretive trail constructed in August 2012. To view a local news story on this project please click on the following link: <http://www.krqe.com/dpp/news/business/high-schoolers-gets-hands-on-learning-kv?ref=scroller&categoryId=10001&status=true>



With the assistance of Dexter NFH & TC, Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, University of Texas – Pan American and Texas Parks and Wildlife, staff stocked RGSM within the Big Bend Reach of the Rio Grande. A total of 120,000 RGSM were stocked among four sites: Grassy Banks, Santa Elena Canyon, Rio Grande Village, and Adam's Ranch.

## Visitors, Education and Outreach

Staff participated in the 2012 Water Festival sponsored by the City of Rio Rancho, held in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Staff led a hands-on activity called The Incredible Journey. Students learned about where water molecules move throughout a complex water cycle. Students pretended to be water molecules and moved from station to station, rolling a cube to see where they went next on their water journey. During this two-day event, staff worked with approximately 286 students from six Rio Rancho elementary schools.



Staff participated in the Bosque Conservation Day held at the Socorro Nature Area. Staff led a hands-on activity called The Incredible Journey. Approximately 135 5th-grade students participated in the activity, learning about where water molecules move

throughout the complex water cycle. Students pretended to be water molecules and moved from station to station, rolling a cube to see where they went next on their water journey. In addition, the students were able to view native Rio Grande fish, learning that humans and animals are all part of the water cycle.



Sara Blocker and Angela James presented *Native Fish in the Classroom* to two Bosque School classes (juniors and seniors) participating in the 2012-2013 Native Fish in the Classroom Project. The presentation included an overview of NMFWCO, the fish the class will receive, the aquarium set-up, and student responsibilities. The Bosque School will receive fish January 2013. In addition to the participating classes, the Bosque School hosted our first Releasing the Natives – Middle Rio Grande fish release in May 2012 and has agreed to host our 2013 release as well. The projects overall goal is to generate enthusiasm for natural resources and foster a sense of stewardship for native fish and their habitats.

U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Southwest Region  
Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation



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## Current staff members

Jim Brooks .....	Project Leader
Jason Davis .....	Assistant Project Leader
Susan Maestas .....	Administrative Officer
Angela Carrillo.....	Administrative Officer
Stephen Davenport .....	Supervisory Fish Biologist
Chris Kitcheyan .....	Supervisory Fish Biologist
Weston Furr .....	Fish Biologist
Thomas Archdeacon.....	Fish Biologist
Dustin Myers.....	Fish Biologist
Angela Palacios James.....	Fish Biologist
Bobby Duran .....	Fish Biologist
Sara Blocker.....	Fish Biologist
Andy Dean.....	Fish Biologist
Christine Stewart.....	Fish Biologist
Ernest Tellier Sr. ....	Biological Science Technician
Tristan Austring .....	STEP
Cole Wolf .....	STEP